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CHICAGO, MADISON AND NORTHERN RAILROAD,  
SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL BRIDGE  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Crossing Sanitary and Ship Canal,  
East of Kedzie Avenue  
Chicago  
Cook County  
Illinois

HAER No. IL-113

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
CHICAGO, MADISON AND NORTHERN RAILROAD,  
SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL BRIDGE  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor

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**Location:** I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Crossing the Sanitary and Ship Canal,  
east of Kedzie Avenue  
Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E. 441670 N. 4631200  
Quad: Englewood

**Date of Construction:** 1899

**Builder:** Toledo Bridge Company

**Present Owner:** Illinois Central Gulf Railroad

**Present Use:** Railroad Bridge

**Significance:** This bridge crossing the Sanitary and Ship Canal was originally built for the Chicago, Madison & Northern Railroad Bridge. When it was completed in 1900 it contained the longest swing span of the several swing bridges erected across the canal.

**Project Information:** The Illinois and Michigan Canal was designated a National Heritage Corridor in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER embarked on an extensive inventory and documentation project of the 100 mile-long corridor. Field work for this project was concluded in 1988. Final editing of the documentation was completed in 1992.

**Historians:** Charles Scott, Frances Alexander, and John Nicolay, 1986; Carolyn Brucken, 1992.

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In 1892 the Sanitary District of Chicago began one of the largest earth moving projects in the history of municipal works. The Sanitary and Ship Canal, extending twenty-eight miles from the South Branch of the Chicago River at Damen Avenue to Lockport, Illinois, reversed the flow of the Chicago River; water drawn from Lake Michigan was discharged into the DesPlaines River at Lockport. As part of this extraordinary civil engineering project, fifteen bridges were initially constructed across the canal. The Sanitary District of Chicago financed and supervised the design and construction of these bridges. This bridge, crossing the canal east of Kedzie Avenue, was erected by the Toledo Bridge Company (Toledo, Ohio) for the Chicago, Madison & Northern Railroad in 1899. The bridge was placed in operation, without turning machinery, on July 2, 1899; by 1900 this machinery had been installed.

The pin-connected steel through truss contains a single span of 479'-5". It rests on ashlar limestone abutments. The center pivot, measuring 32'-6" in diameter, is also ashlar limestone capped with concrete. The pivot supports a 28'-0" diameter turntable that is no longer operable. Of the seven surviving swing bridges across the Sanitary and Ship Canal, this bridge contains the longest span. Currently, the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad owns and operates the bridge.

SOURCES:

"Bridges Over the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering Record, v. 36 (June 19, 1897): 53.

"Railway Drawbridges Over the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering News, v. 38 (December 2, 1897): 363-366.

Isham Randolph, "The Salient Features of the Chief Engineer's Annual Report of the Drainage Canal of the Sanitary District of Chicago for 1898," Journal of the Western Society of Engineers, v. 4 (August 1899): 317-334.

"Swing Bridges on the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering Record, v. 36 (October 2, 1897): 378; v. 36 (October 30, 1897): 469; v. 37 (December 25, 1897): 71-73; v. 37 (March 19, 1898): 338-339.

C. Arch Williams, The Sanitary District of Chicago: History of its Growth and Development (Chicago: The Sanitary District of Chicago: 1919).